

Erzsebet Spiegler And Friends



This is a picture of my future wife Erzsebet Spiegler (nee Reich), on the left, with friends in the Szechenyi spa in Budapest in 1940. As we could not afford to go on vacation, we used to go to the open-air swimming pools in Budapest - usually on Sundays - and we had a very good time. When I was demobilized in 1938, I learned to dance and we used to go dancing. At that time there was a café right here at the corner, it was called Pannonia café, and there I met my wife. She had three siblings. This house where I live at the moment belonged to my wife's family; her grandmother lived here. She was born in this room - there were no maternity houses in those times. Her aunt lived downstairs, and there were two tenants and a caretaker. And her grandmother had a glass and porcelain wholesale store as well. She sold it off, and my mother bought it. But at that time they didn't know we would be relatives. They were very religious; they observed everything. Then I started to go dancing with her, and after a while I told her that I was going to betroth her as my fiancé. I pulled the ring off my finger and put it on hers. This was in 1939. After that we went out for five years, when finally my wife said, 'Well, we've been going out for five years, so I want to marry you properly.' My poor father-in-law was sitting out here, there was a big vestibule, and a worktable. He sat there, and I asked for his daughter's hand in marriage. Thereupon they went to my parents and asked them for my hand. This was in 1942. And immediately after our engagement they called me up again. It was only for two months. Then they demobilized me, and then called me up again. I was released from service again, and then they called me up in July 1942, and I was there until the end of the war. The wedding was held because they said in March 1944 that they would take away the girls but not the women. Then I came home - I was in forced labor service at Kassa - and we got married. It was a civil marriage. And when we came home we had our religious marriage in the synagogue of Ujpest. I had lived in Istvan Square before the war - I joined up from there -with my wife. But she was deported in May. Her brother was deported, too.